

## **Bosnia and Hercegovina**

{bahz'-nee-uh, hur-tsoh-goh-vee'-nuh}

Bosnia and Hercegovina (often referred to as Bosnia), a Balkan country, was formerly one of the republics of YUGOSLAVIA. It declared its independence and received international recognition in the spring of 1992 and was convulsed by civil war during the first months of its existence. The republic is bounded on the east by Serbia, on the south by Montenegro, and on the north and west by Croatia. Its capital is SARAJEVO.

### **LAND AND PEOPLE**

The names Bosnia and Hercegovina refer to two separate regions: Bosnia (its name derived from the Bosna River) occupies the great majority of the republic's territory; Hercegovina is a much smaller area in the south, around the city of Mostar; its name derives from the German Herzog ("duke"), the title borne by its former rulers.

Most of Bosnia and Hercegovina is covered by the DINARIC ALPS. The Bosna, Drina, Una, and Vrbas rivers are tributaries of the SAVA, which forms part of the country's northern border. The Neretva River flows south into the Adriatic; near its mouth is the republic's only outlet to the sea—about 20 km (12 mi) of coastline. In addition to Sarajevo and Mostar, other important towns include Banja Luka and Tuzla.

Bosnia and Hercegovina's three main population groups—the Muslims, the Orthodox Serbians, and the Roman Catholic Croats—are all South Slav peoples who speak Serbo-Croatian but differ in religion and culture. At the beginning of the 1992 war the Croats were concentrated along the western border; the Muslims and Serbs were more widely dispersed throughout the republic.

### **ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**

In normal times two-thirds of the population are engaged in agriculture. The republic is a major producer of timber, and it contained about 60 percent of Yugoslavia's armaments industry. Its rivers are an abundant source of hydroelectric power. Bosnia's economy declined along with the Yugoslav economy in general during the 1980s and was completely disrupted by the warfare that broke out after independence was declared.

### **HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT**

Medieval Bosnia was nominally a banat (client state) of Hungary, but by the 13th century it enjoyed autonomy under its rulers, the bans. The most prominent of these was Turtko (r. 1353-91), who adopted the title king of Bosnia and Serbia. Hercegovina was established as a separate duchy in 1448. In the 14th and 15th centuries the BOGOMILS, a heretical Christian sect, were numerous in Bosnia. When the Ottoman Turks conquered the area in 1463, many of the Bogomils adopted Islam. During the Ottoman period the Bosnian nobles were Muslim and the peasantry Christian.

As Turkish power waned in the 19th century Bosnia's Muslim nobility repeatedly rebelled against the sultan; a general revolt in 1875-76 was supported by Serbia, which claimed Bosnia and Hercegovina as part of its territory. After the revolt had been quelled, the Congress of Berlin (1878) allowed Austria-Hungary to occupy the two provinces, which remained nominally part of the Ottoman Empire. Austria-Hungary's outright annexation of Bosnia-Hercegovina in 1908 further increased tensions with Serbia, and the Bosnian Serbs agitated against Austrian rule. In June 1914, Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb, assassinated the Austrian archduke FRANZ FERDINAND in Sarajevo. The resulting conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary quickly escalated into World War I.

After the war Bosnia-Hercegovina was incorporated into the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which became Yugoslavia in 1929. During World War II the region was divided between Italy and the German puppet state of Croatia, and in 1945 it was reincorporated into Communist Yugoslavia as one of the country's six federal republics.

Croatia and Slovenia seceded from Yugoslavia in 1991, and Bosnia followed their example in March 1992. The Bosnian Serbs took up arms to resist this move and were backed by the Serbian-led Yugoslav military, many of whose weapons factories are located in Bosnia. A bitter struggle ensued, in which the Serbs systematically expelled Muslims and Croats from the Serb-controlled areas—a policy known as "ethnic cleansing." By late 1993, an estimated 700,000 refugees had been created. Serbian forces held about two-thirds of the republic's

territory and had proclaimed their own Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina. (See YUGOSLAV WAR.) Bosnia's Muslims and Croats agreed on Mar. 1, 1994, to link those parts of the country in which either exerted control into a financial and economic confederation; Bosnian Serb leaders denounced the pact as provocative and threatening to their interests. The agreement was formally ratified on March 18 by presidents Alija IZETBEGOVIC of Bosnia and Franjo TUDJMAN of Croatia. In an effort to bring about a settlement of the war, the United States, Russia, and the European Union agreed on June 29 on a map for the territorial division of Bosnia; the division was said to offer 51 percent of the territory to the Bosnian federation of Muslims and Croats and 49 percent to the Bosnian Serbs. The Bosnian Serbs, who now hold 70 percent of Bosnia, objected to the terms of the proposed international settlement.

Bibliography: Allcock, John, Yugoslavia in Transition (1991); Glenny, Misha, The Fall of Yugoslavia (1993).